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Commission for Social Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing
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Status of preparations for the Second World Assembly on Ageing

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Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At its resumed first session in December 2001, the Commission for Social Development acting as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing took note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Towards the Second World Assembly on Ageing".[1] The General Assembly, at its fifty-sixth session, took note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Preparations for the Second World Assembly on Ageing".[2] The present report provides an update on the activities undertaken by the secretariat since the issuance of those reports.

II. Activities undertaken

2. In January 2002, the Secretary-General sent letters to heads of State and Government advising them of the purpose and focus of the Second World Assembly on Ageing and drawing their attention to the General Assembly's invitation to all Member States to participate in the Assembly at the highest level. On 14 January 2002, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to the Permanent Representatives extending an invitation to Governments to participate in the Assembly. Invitations have also been sent to United Nations entities, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Second World Assembly on Ageing.

* E/CN.5/2002/PC/1

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3. Two planning missions to Madrid were undertaken by the secretariat in 2001, one in March and another in December. A third and final mission visited Madrid in January 2002 to finalize arrangements for conference facilities and space configuration, and public information activities, including media coverage, as well as for overall security arrangements. The Host Government Agreement is soon to be signed by the Government of Spain.

4. In accordance with decision 2001/PC/1, a report of the Secretary-General "Abuse of older persons" was prepared for presentation to the second session of the preparatory committee (E/CN.5/2002/PC/2). That report, based on a paper commissioned by the secretariat from an expert in this field, has been compiled from materials submitted by specialists.

5. A civil society consultation for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, financed by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and organized by the secretariat, in cooperation with HelpAge International, a non-governmental organization, took place in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 26 to 28 November 2001. The consultation brought together selected members of civil society who had taken part in grass-roots and national level consultations by and for older persons that were organized or facilitated by HelpAge International during 2001 and designed to ensure that policy makers and delegations participating in the Second World Assembly on Ageing were made aware of the voices of older persons. The report of the consultation was distributed at the resumed first session of the preparatory committee in December 2001 and is posted on the web site of the Division for Social Policy and Development (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing).

Regional commissions

6. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held a regional preparatory consultation for the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Macao, China, on 27 and 28 September 2001, at which the Macao Recommendations for strengthening the draft International Plan of Action on Ageing were adopted.

7. The Economic Commission for Europe is continuing preparations for the Ministerial Conference on Ageing, which is to take place from 11 to 13 September 2002 in Berlin. The Commission has been working closely with the secretariat for the World Assembly in harmonizing preparation of a document to disseminate the outcome of the World Assembly on Ageing at the regional level.

8. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia organized a regional meeting in preparation for the World Assembly from 5 to 8 February 2002 in Beirut. The main objectives were to review progress achieved and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the Arab Plan of Action for the Ageing, adopted in Cairo in 1993, and to produce an Arab plan for action on ageing to the year 2012.

9. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean took a central role in a regional preparatory meeting of Ibero-American countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, organized and sponsored by the Government of Spain and held from 19 to 21 November 2001 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The Commission, in collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Inter-American Development Bank, also

prepared guidelines for the use of all member countries in their preparation of country reports on ageing to be presented at the Second World Assembly. The Commission has also created an inter-agency working group on ageing to define coordinated support to countries of the region on the implementation of recommendations that will come from the Second World Assembly.

United Nations organizations

10. The United Nations Population Fund organized an expert group meeting with the theme Population Ageing and Development: Social, Health and Gender Issues with a Focus on the Poor in Old Age, which was held in Malta from 29 to 31 October 2001. At the Pan American Health Organization meeting in Quebec City, Canada, held from 6 to 8 December 2001, the Quebec City Declaration was adopted. The World Health Organization (WHO) held a Global Consultation Meeting on Ageing and Health in Kobe, Japan, from 23 to 25 January 2002.

III. United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing

11. The United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing has received a contribution from the Government of Sweden, earmarked to fund the participation of delegates from least developed countries. The secretariat has received several enquiries from Member States regarding the availability of financial assistance to attend the Assembly.

IV. Public information

12. The Department of Public Information has been actively involved in carrying out an information campaign for the Second World Assembly on Ageing. Awareness of the Assembly has been building steadily; in particular, there is strong support and interest among non-governmental organizations, as well as a number of key media organizations. The activities of the Department of Public Information are contained in the paper entitled "Information campaign for the Second World Assembly on Ageing carried out by the Department of Public Information", which is being submitted to the current session of the preparatory committee.

Notes

[1] E/CN.5/2001/PC/2 and Corr.1.

[2] A/56/152.